

Reply to Sir W.
Dunlop's Question
of Transportation.

Providence 10 April 1844

Report.

In answer to the first Question I believe it is not ^{desirable} that Transportation of Convicts to this Colony should cease altogether And I arrive at this conclusion from the following considerations

1 As to the Moral question which I think should be kept quite distinct from consideration of a pecuniary nature we ought to take an enlarged and philosophical view of the actual state of society and of our own peculiar duties in the position which Providence has placed us ~~in~~ relation to our fellowmen - It would be ^{improper} in the limits of a brief report to explore all the ramifications to which this important subject might lead or even to include the results of such an inquiry if such a course were pursued - I shall therefore merely observe that the laws of Society having affixed the penalty

the penalty

the penalty of Transportation on certain
offenders with a view to their punishment and
Reformation and experience having demon-
-strated that these objects are best carried out by
by placing them under those whose interest
is to make them useful and honest members
of Society - to teach habits of industry to the
littles and idle and by example and precept
to enforce and encourage by the principles of
Religion and Virtue it is evident that no
real friend of Man can consider this other
than a duty so far as it is connected with
his own well being like the physician who
walks among the sick he escapes moral
contamination by the virtue of those antidotes
he comes constantly with him - An abhor-
rence of those vices which he sees have
led to the consequences he observes and
deplores - But like the physician the
free settler or Landholder must have no
more

moral patients than he can attempt to be
must likewise be held in honor upheld by
by the Government in property - in Authority
for it is in the honor and under channels
of society that contamination takes place
where an individual is reduced to be on a
level with or perhaps dependant on the
prisoner population such as the little General
Dealer or the keeper of a low public House or
it may be the impoverished cultivator of a few
acres whose circumstances oblige oblige him and
his family to herd with the convicts

With proper precautions I think we may
conclude that Transportation may be continued
to this Colony - with advantage to the Mother
Country to the Colonist himself and to the
free settler - With regard to raising the
price of Labour I think we are not in a con-
-dition to do so because in Port Phillip and
South Australia the occupants of Land on
terms so infinitely more advantageous than
they

that they can afford to sell their produce
their fat Stock their Tallow and their
Wool on Cheaper

cheaper terms than we can do, though our Labour be at half the price. I am not aware of any two countries so near each other in situation, which differ so much in the actual terms of rent for Land as Dan Diemen Land and port Phillip or New South Wales. We must therefore have cheap Labour as a counterpoise to the cheap Land of those Countries or we are ruined with regard to agricultural produce we have the advantage as Labour forms a greater item in the cost of production of our than their goods. I think in answer to the

2nd Question - that Convicts should be transported in reduced numbers so as to form not more than one third of the free population at the utmost - but probably it ought to be less considering that the latter consists of men women and children and the former are principally adults. When the present number in the Colony is reduced to a safe standard, that should be kept up by an annual supply to replace those who emigrate or are removed by death -

With regard to the

3rd Question - which embraces a wide field for remark. I think the grand attraction which

experience has taught us; both from political and
negative evidence; to be requisite, is that the Convict
should after his arrival be removed as soon as possible
into private service or public work: as a Letter
I have invariably found that those men turned out
the best, who were assigned directly on being directly
on being landed from the Ship and this circum-
stance was so universally experienced by every one,
that it was with the greatest reluctance he related
to the Gang for a Servant. The discipline
the prisoners received on Ship board during
a long voyage. The tone of Authority of the Officers
of the Ship and the Military Guard, the
instant obedience paid and the docility
with which every order is carried out; habituated
them down to Submission and often should
them the importance and necessity of it. Their
own lives being then dependent thereupon the
Serenity of the Convict has never been allowed
to be so respectful, as when ready under ^{such} discipline
The moment of his arrival in a new Colony
Country is a most important epocha ^{from}
his existence - a new career is to be begun

if he has at all reflected on the cause of his
present condition. He will now form some
resolutions of amendment: these resolutions
will be strengthened and encouraged in private
service. I have ~~seen~~ men and old offenders
too distressed in heart from a few words of
kindness addressed to them by their own
mistress, and such men have turned out
excellent servants. but had they been sent

sent to a probation or a punishment gang in all probability they would only have been more hardened in iniquity - at all events, they would have learned that custom & habit can render any condition tolerable and the terrors of the Chain gang would prove a small restraint, from the commission of future crimes.

If a convict have been a mechanic or a ploughman or farm servant before he was transported; I consider he suffers much deterioration by being sent for six or twelve months to a probation party. He is put to inferior employment - grows listless & indifferent his temper is spoiled by being put under inferior men as to information and skill - and having lived over the favourable moment of his first entrance into the colony when every thing was new and inviting to the leading of a new life, he on being transferred to private service considers it as a mere change of taskmasters.

I think therefore that the alterations required in the Regulation respecting the hiring of Paßholders are

1st That they should as soon as possible after arrival be obliged to take private service for a certain fixed term of years as apprentices or indentured servants at such low or moderate wages as would supply them with necessary clothing; Rations Bedding etc to be fixed as at present. leaving it to the masters liberality to add to his servants comforts or pay as a reward for good conduct.

After the fixed term of service the convict should be eligible - if he could give proof of good conduct to receive a Ticket of Leave; or before the expiration of that term if it be the pleasure of the local Governor. This ticket

of leave to be for two or three years.
There should be no compulsory deposit of a
part of their wages in the savings Bank.
It is unjust to the masters to compel him
to pay some wages in the first instance
than will barely provide food clothing
& lodging with a few sunnies for his share
~~besides in this country~~ In most instances
it is as much as he can do for himself
& family. besides in this country there
is no lack of immediate employment
for the industrious the few shillings
a man can easily save himself.
If he has the least self denial in
the world will be amply sufficient
to enable him to travel to his next
place and if he have none the
deposit in the savings Bank will
be dissipated in a few hours though
it were paid him at the time he
needed it.

The Labor of the Convict will be of
more benefit to his employer as an
indentured servant for a term of years,
as he will in such a time be made
acquainted with his duty - and habits
of industry steadiness and regularity
of conduct will thereby be promoted
to a much greater extent than can
possibly be by the present system

The condition of private service
should be looked upon as the
most respectable position

position - The last party the next so the Chanin
 Yang & Scott Arthur gather in degradation - If the
 convert has plant in private service at the post
 he fears to lose it by misconduct - the condition
 of the Road parties being unknown to him is
 looked upon with alarm the greater becomes
 unsuspected - it should be the first downward
 step and indeed it is so, for there is a great
 difference between a Servant on wages standing
 in a certain relation to his Master by whom he
 is kindly ^{& civil} treated - and a man under an overseer
 on the Road - but if you accustom a man in
 the first instance to Road parties, he loses that
 better feeling. He has no pride of station and
 though hired, on the first temptation he falls
 and at length

he becomes quite calm and indifferent
and him to a lost party, the Chain gang
or where you will. There are exceptions
of course in the conduct of some individuals
but as a general principle I should say
that there is infinitely more hope of reform
& improvement from a man who escapes the degra-
dation and contagion of bad exampled company
upon mixing with others worse than himself in
a prison or Barrack - than from those who
are exposed to such influences - Such
indeed has been the result of my experience
of these men during a period of twenty four
years in which many changes of system
have been made -

I have no doubt but

Yours Esq. -

will receive some reports differing from
the opinions here expressed and some
may recommend a cessation of hostilities
entirely. - Viewing our situation as a
body together I am of opinion that
so sudden a change would bring on
a crisis of general distress more severe
than that from which we are slowly
recovering.

I must apologize for sending
this report in the crude state in which
it has been first composed but my
business is not being at hand to
make a fair copy I trust you
will be so good as to excuse it.

I have the honor to be

Sir Your Obedient

Wm. M. M. M. M. M.
John Leach